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RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 8557  
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 9142  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 2286  
RHJMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 001737

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PGOV KN JA

SUBJECT: PM FUKUDA TO PUBLIC: NO GAP WITH U.S. ON DELISTING

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer per 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda stressed to the press June 24 that he is in full agreement with the United States on the importance of resolving the North Korea nuclear issue. If removing North Korea from the state sponsors of terror list leads to nuclear progress, then "it should be welcomed," he said. Opposition leader Ozawa and representatives of the abductees families were critical of the possible delisting, however, stressing that delisting will remove a key tool for resolving the abductions issue.  
End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) In remarks to the press June 24, Prime Minister Fukuda said if the U.S. removal of North Korea from the list of state sponsors of terror helps to lead to a resolution of the nuclear issue, then "it should be welcomed." "There is absolutely no difference of opinion on this matter between the United States and Japan," he stressed. He went on to say that the abductions issue must be resolved and that the United States and Japan must remain in close contact on the matter.

¶3. (C) Although some conservative press comments noted that the PM was the only high-level official to have a positive outlook on the possible DPRK delisting, most editorials urged the Japanese Government to use the 45 days after the Congressional notification of delisting to cooperate with the United States and press North Korea. In that vein, Foreign Minister Koumura remarked on June 24 that he plans to tell the Secretary during their meeting on June 27 that the Japanese Government hopes that the United States will not "give up its delisting card just yet."

¶4. (C) For his part, opposition Democratic Party of Japan leader Ozawa was critical of the rumored delisting, noting that although the United States had told the abductees' family members "nice things," in the end Japan's situation was not taken into consideration in U.S. strategy. Representatives of the abductees' families have also expressed their concerns to the press, noting their fear that delisting will remove a key source of leverage in resolving the abductions issue.

SCHIEFFER